

REMARKS

At the outset, the Examiner is thanked for the thorough review and consideration of the pending application. The Office Action dated March 29, 2005 has been received and its contents carefully reviewed.

The Examiner objects to the drawings. Applicants respectfully submit that the features of the claims are illustrated throughout the figures, for example in Figures 12-14A, and these features are described in detail in the accompanying specification, for example at paragraphs [0063]-[0074]. Applicants respectfully request that the objections to the drawings be withdrawn accordingly.

The Examiner objects to the specification for not providing antecedent basis for the first groove in claim 1. Applicants note that the specification describes this feature in paragraph [0072], for example. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objections to the specification be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 16-18, 21-33, and 36-47. Accordingly, claims 1-47 are currently pending. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims is respectfully requested.

The Examiner rejects claims 1-3, 5, 6, 8-10, 14, 16-18, and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 3,880,687 to Elmendorf. Claims 4-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Elmendorf in view of U.S. Patent 3,846,219 to Kunz. Claims 11-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Elmendorf in view of U.S. Patent 6,134,854 to Stanchfield. Claims 15, 19, and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Elmendorf. Claims 22-26, 28-32, 34-43, 45 and 47 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stanchfield.

The cited references including Elmendorf, Kunz, and Stanchfield do not disclose or suggest all of the features of the invention, including “a laminate impregnated with a thermosetting resin” as recited in claim 1 or “at least two planks, wherein each plank comprises a laminate” as recited in claim 22. None of the cited references, including Elmendorf, Kunz, or Stanchfield, considered separately or in combination, teach, disclose, or suggest at least these recited features.

Applicants believe the foregoing amendments place the application in condition for allowance and early, favorable action is respectfully solicited.

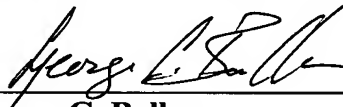
If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. §1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: September 29, 2005

By



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